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Electoral Reform in England and Wales: the Development and Operation of the Parliamentary Franchise, 1832-1885. By CHARLES SEYMOUR, M.A., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History, Yale College. [Yale Historical Publications, Studies, III.] (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1915. Pp. xix, 564.)

IN view of the immense and beneficent changes in political and social conditions in England directly resulting from the reform acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884, and also of the influence of these reforms on the freedom and the democratic constitutions of Canada and the other oversea dominions of the British Empire, it is a matter for surprise that so few books of permanent value have been written on this nineteenth-century legislation. It is a further matter of surprise that until Mr. Charles Seymour's *Electoral Reform in England and Wales* was published, there was no book from which the far-reaching legislation of 1832, 1867, and 1884 could be traced. Roebuck and Molesworth, Homersham Cox, Murdoch, and Heaton, and more recently Butler and Veitch, have all made serviceable contributions towards a history of the reform of the English representative system. This is especially true of Cox and Butler and Veitch. Each of the seven writers who have been named "did his bit" towards helping students of English history to realize how the ancient franchises on which the House of Commons was elected for centuries before 1832 have in the last seventy years been replaced by an electoral system that is nearly as democratic in its inclusiveness as that of the United States or Canada. But four of these seven writers, Roebuck, Molesworth, Butler, and Veitch, are exclusively concerned with the reform act of 1832. Homersham Cox's histories of the representation do not go beyond the act of 1867; and for thirty years, in fact since the reform of 1884, there has been an obvious lack of a history adequately covering not only the first great reform for which Grey, Russell, Althorp, and Durham were responsible, but also the act of 1867, for which Disraeli and a Conservative government were sponsors, and the act of 1884, the most comprehensive act of all, which Gladstone carried through the House of Commons with quite considerable support from the Conservative opposition of that period.

Mr. Seymour's excellent monograph fills the long-existing gap in the history of the electoral franchises of England and Wales; and fills it so satisfactorily that in conjunction with Veitch's *Genesis of Parliamentary Reform* (1913), and Butler's *The Passing of the Great Reform Bill* (1914), students of English history now have in not more than three books a complete and practically continuous story of the movements for parliamentary reform; of the fortunes of the numerous reform bills from 1830 to 1884 in the House of Commons; and of the influence of the acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 on the making of the political England that was in existence at the time the great European War was begun.

Comprehensiveness and completeness as regards the franchise legislation of the nineteenth century form one of the principal characteristics of Mr. Seymour's book. But it has two other excellent features which will enhance its permanent value and its usefulness to students of English parliamentary history; for Mr. Seymour has succeeded in two tasks that had never before been attempted by any writer of nineteenth-century English history. He has embodied in his book a comprehensive and singularly clear and readable history of the registration laws and of the working of the registration courts, first established in 1832; and he has written an equally interesting history of the weeding out of corruption in the English parliamentary electorate. The enactments after 1832 which worked to this end, particularly the acts of 1854 and the James act of 1883, are described in detail. So are other influences making for better conditions—the enlargement of the electorate in 1867 and 1884; the ballot which came into service in 1872; and the gradual dying off of the old and seasoned corruptionists, who after 1832 continued to vote in many of the older boroughs on the freeman, burghage, scot and lot, and potwalloper franchises of the unreformed House of Commons. The only criticism that can be offered as regards this subject is that Mr. Seymour does not take fully into account the gradual development of a better England as a result of the education act of 1870, or of the fact that a new democratic spirit began to pervade the working class electorate almost as soon as the trade unionists, led by Burt and Macdonald, of the miners' unions, realized that the parliamentary franchise was of more value than a money bribe or a free drink on election day, or a free ride to the polls at the expense of a parliamentary candidate.

EDWARD PORRITT.

The Diplomacy of the War of 1914: the Beginnings of the War.

By ELLERY C. STOWELL. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1915. Pp. xvii, 728.)

ASSUMING that the actual correspondence in the colored books is at his readers' command Professor Stowell in this large and well-printed volume (in which but one typographical error has been noted) gives us: (a) a brief review of European events from the formation of the Triple Alliance to the summer of 1914; (b) a carefully reasoned statement of the steps, day by day and state by state, which intervened between the Austrian demands upon Servia of July 23 and the general outbreak of hostilities, so far as possible in the language of the notes; (c) a chapter of conclusions and reflections, as to the causes of the war immediate and more remote and as to the justice of the various contentions, which is acute, illuminating, and suggestive; (d) a curious and ingenious restatement of the said conclusions in the form of question and answer; (e) a variety of diplomatic documents bearing upon